

COPY

To C.D. ✓
Copy 5 C.E.O.

SECRET.

To: AD/A

D/T
A.C.S.I.S.

From N.

I had the interview with Prince Bernhard this morning.

He commenced by saying that the reason for asking me to see him was that he feared that certain Dutch people might be jeopardised if two organisations got into touch with them. His anxiety had been aroused by the fact that six Dutchmen who arrived by air last week had told Queen Wilhelmina and himself that their relations had an organisation at Apeldoorn covering the Veluwe district of Gelderland and that they had been entrusted with a code to be communicated to the Netherlands Government. The escapees had also told me this and had informed the Prince they had conveyed this information to me. H.R.H. now feared that if van't Sant through Broadway used these people in Holland and I did the same they might be seriously endangered. He, Prince Bernhard, was completely au courant with van't Sant's dealings with Broadway and mentioned C. and Col. Rabagliati by name. I replied that I for one had always tried to safeguard the lives of Dutchmen and certainly did not intend to risk any in this case. Further, that Col. R. and I had no secrets from one another, so that there was no chance of duplication or overlapping. Prince Bernhard then asked me point blank whether I had any personal objection to van't Sant, to which I replied that this was not a personal matter. I further said that I did not consider van't Sant fit to deal with military matters which were not his business and that I trusted nobody with the lives of any friends in Holland and knowing van't Sant's past from the days that he was an inspector of police at Rotterdam, I did not feel justified in disclosing personalities to him. H.R.H. then launched out into a statement that van't Sant had the complete confidence of the Queen and himself, that he knew the whole of the late Prince Consort's lurid life and was therefore trustworthy, to which I replied that the fact that van't Sant knew so many details was capable of a double interpretation which did not require elucidation. H.R.H. then said that van't Sant had sacrificed his reputation for the benefit and the good name of the House of Orange and I said that in that case he might go down to history as another martyr for a Royal House but being but an ordinary person it did not change my conviction that I was not justified in having any dealings with him.

I said that I realised that the Queen was greatly perturbed at the knowledge in possession of an outsider, not only as a Queen but as any lady of more or less Victorian frame of mind would be, but that a certain amount of this knowledge was also shared by others, who were sorry for her, amongst whom I was myself. The Prince then said H.M. had before his marriage told him the complete story of his late future father-in-law's misdeeds and that he had probably been more foolish than criminal. Van't Sant had extricated him, the late Prince Henry, from a number of messes and Prince B. said that should he ever himself get into a mess he would entrust this extrication to van't Sant though he knew that people were saying that van't Sant was trying to lead him astray in the same way he was said to have led Prince Henry astray. He, Prince Bernhard, had, however, sown his wild oats before his marriage and thanked God he had had another kind of upbringing to the late Prince Henry's. He further said he had access to all the Queen's secret papers and was convinced just as the Queen was of van't Sant's complete integrity. I replied that even if the Queen asked me to trust van't Sant with my friends' lives, I still would refuse.

The Prince then said he respected my views and if he was certain that no Dutchman's lives were to be endangered owing to overlapping, he would abide by my assurance.

He finally said that the Queen had heard two Dutchmen had arrived from Holland who had not been given an opportunity of seeing her. I replied I was aware of this but that these men were at her disposal provided nobody else could get at them. My recruits had been interfered with and I did not wish the same to happen again. The Prince asked particulars and I mentioned the name of Mr. Gleichmann, who refused to continue training unless I could assure him that van't Sant did not know that he was going to Holland. This, as you know, was the original reason for my first approach to Prof. Gerbrandy. Prince B., who of course knew Gleichmann's connexions in Holland (Ernst Helding and C.P. v. Eeghen are his uncles) said this could easily be accounted for as the van Eeghens were among the creditors of the late Prince Henry who were mulcted by the fact that the estate was wound up without the heirs accepting responsibility for all debts. The creditors whose claims had a justifiable foundation, amongst which were those of the van Eeghens, had been offered compensation through van't Sant on behalf of the Queen. They had however not been paid in full and therefore maintained a commission had stuck to van't Sant's hands. He, Prince B., had however seen the full accounts and receipts and could assure me this was not the case.

R.V.L.

13.5.41.